

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 29, 34, 48, 53, 65, and 70 are pending, with all being independent.

Claims 18 through 28, 30 through 33, 35 through 47, 49 through 52, 54 through 64, and 66 through 69 have been cancelled without prejudice. All pending claims have been amended by being rewritten in independent form, with formal amendments as discussed below.

Claims 18 through 28, 30 through 33, 35 through 47, 49 through 52, 54 through 64, and 66 through 69 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) over Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 9-186923 (“JP ‘823”), which was cited in the March 15, 2004 and April 20, 2004 Information Disclosure Statements, and under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over JP ‘823 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,568,183 (Cortjens, et al.). Claims 29, 34, 48, 53, 65, and 70 were objected to and indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. All rejections and objections are respectfully traversed, and are submitted to have been obviated by the cancellation without prejudice of the rejected claims, and the rewriting of the objected-to claims in independent form, with formal amendments that are earnestly believed by Applicants not to affect the allowability of the claims. For example, duplicate text in Claims 48 and 65 has been deleted.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

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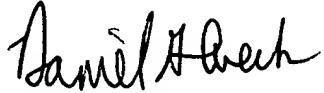
On April 20, 2004, Applicants filed a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement forwarding a translation of JP 9-186923, which translation has been made of record. In reviewing the official file (i.e., the Image File Wrapper System), Applicants have noted that Fig. 4 of that translation does not appear to be present in the official file; accordingly, Applicants are submitting herewith a copy of that figure, and respectfully request that the same be placed in the official file (Image File Wrapper System) and considered by the Examiner. If any fee is due in this regard, then Applicants authorize the same to be charged to Deposit Account 06-1205. Favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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